

BOARD IS SURPRISED

Bankers' League Managers Discuss Recent Action.

CONDEMN PRESIDENT KENYON

Consensus of Opinion Is that He Overstepped His Authority—Prominent Member of League States Commercial Side of the Case—Amateur Commission to Wait.

By N. T. WORLEY.

Members of the board of managers of the Bankers' League when seen yesterday with reference to the article published exclusively in The Washington Herald on Sunday, were of the opinion that the protest of the American Security and Trust Company and the letter of President Kenyon to the amateur commission were both unfair to the other teams of the league, and the board of managers.

The situation is summed up as follows by a prominent member of the board: "The American Security and Trust Company has built up a crack team of ball players. It can probably assemble three good teams from its own force. Several of the players are or have been college stars; it has employed two of the best players in the District to instruct and develop its material. Money has been no object, and it is a matter of unfavorable comment among the members and followers of the league that this team has had more money spent on it than all of the other teams of the league combined.

"I have read the protest of Manager Hayes, of the American Security and Trust Company team, addressed to the amateur commission, which is decidedly misleading, in that it does not state the entire situation. I don't think the amateur commission will pay any attention to it, as the Bankers' League is a complete organization in itself, with a constitution, and, of course, the amateur commission will accept a decision of the board of managers of the Bankers' League as to who is the winner for the year and also its rulings on matters relating to eligibility of players and other purely routine business.

Postponed Games Must Be Played. "The board has already decided that the postponed games be played, and the schedule for these games appeared in yesterday's Washington Herald. The American Security and Trust Company team will have to play the games assigned to it or suffer the consequences.

"The latest move of the Trust Company is, in the opinion of those managers I have talked with, not calculated to increase its popularity among the bank men of the city, and there are some in favor of leaving them out of the league next year. With reference to the protest of the American Security and Trust to the amateur commission, that the games played by them with Washington Loan and Trust, and Commercial National, previously thrown out, should be restored to them, I would say that the representative from Riggs did not consider their resignation accepted, nor did the representative from American Security and Trust so consider it, as both were present and voted at meetings of the managers, held as late as June 16, and at this meeting the representative of American Security and Trust admitted that the game should be played over, offering no objection to the protest.

"The American Security and Trust company did not do the square thing in taking on Riggs players in the game of June 7 and 14 and their action was particularly unfair with reference to the game on June 7, as at that time the only official of the league who had knowledge of the resignation was the secretary, who was also an employee of the trust company. The Reay matter, as shown by the minutes, has been thoroughly discussed and finally decided by the board, which declared Mr. Reay to be eligible. It has not been shown that the National City Bank used an ineligible player, and the matter never having been before the board in any shape.

No Grounds for Complaint. "The complaint that the American Security and Trust Company was not given a square deal by the board when it ordered the game between American Security and Trust and Washington Loan and Trust of July 16, postponed, and that only twenty-four hours' notice was given of the special meeting, is only partly true.

"Several days before this special meeting was called the president agreed to call this meeting, which was only necessary by reason of the dilatory and evasive actions of the trust company's manager when requested to informally agree to postponement. The game with Baltimore, Chapter American Institute of Banking was scheduled months before, it being the annual contest for the silver cup donated by one of the chapters. It was a game dear to the heart of every bank man in Washington, officers and clerks alike. The Baltimore boys had gone to large expense for the entertainment of their guests, and to have disappointed them would stamp us as bankers absolutely indifferent to their invitation and hospitality. It should also be noted that the president of the league had addressed a letter to President Kenyon asking that the Washington and American Security and Trust game be postponed, but, in spite of its official character, he did not deem it of sufficient importance to read at the meeting of July 15. It was, however, by vote, included in the minutes. The schedule as originally made up early in the spring of July 15, open, but by reason of rain, a number of games were postponed, and when the schedule of postponed games was made this date was inadvertently included, American Security and Trust Company agreeing in the preparation of the new schedule.

"All things considered, the trust company has no kick coming to it with reference to the postponement or any other plea in its letter to the commission." A representative of the local chapter of Mr. H. S. Reeside, of American Security and Trust, on the telephone, but was informed that he was out of the city. It is not expected that the Fifteenth street bankers will take any further action, and they will in all probability await action by the amateur commission.

An official of the amateur commission was asked what action that body would take in the controversy, and he at first refused to discuss the matter. However, after the writer promised not to divulge his name, he loosened up and said as follows:

"The amateur commission cannot take up or settle any family fights among the nine different leagues now playing under the rules of the commission. We have to accept the decision of the president of the league as to the winner in each of the leagues.

"Each league elects its own officers, and

if they do not act properly or fail to carry out the will of the majority, the board of managers of the league has a right to remove them and elect others who will act in the right manner. We have received no letter from the board of managers of the Bankers' League, but notice from the story in The Washington Herald Sunday that a committee of three was appointed to draw up a letter to the commission, which will declare the action taken by President Kenyon, of the Bankers' League, an improper one. Until that letter is received, the matter will not come before the commission, and what action the commission will take will depend entirely upon the contents of the letter from the board and the evidence submitted."

The manager of the Commercial National Bank team, John Poole, was asked if he desired to reply to the statement of the American Security and Trust Company manager. Mr. Poole, beyond expressing his indignation at the action of Mr. Kenyon, declined to be interviewed, but inferred that he might have something to say at a later date.

HOW I GOT MY START.

By MORDECAI BROWN.

Premier pitcher Chicago National League club, and considered by many judges the best pitcher the game has ever known.

When I was a boy I had a hard time. My people were poor, and I was lucky to have one shoe and one rubber boot. I started to work in the mines around Coville, Ind., about the time other kids are starting to kindergarten.

Just when I began playing ball I can't remember. It must have been when I was a kid seven or eight years old, and I always loved the game and played it every chance I got. I played on the dump at noon hours, throwing and catching a ball. The boys in the mine all liked me, because I was square and honest with them, and I guess because my hand was crippled when I was a kid by



Mordecai Brown.

getting it caught in a feed chopper. Pretty soon, when I was about fourteen, I began to get real wages in the mine. I became a checker, hired by the union to check the coal that came up and keep the accounts of the men. I hadn't much schooling, but was forced to study arithmetic to keep the records of 900 miners and check off their coal, and then check off with the company in tons so they could settle with the miners. Also, I had to keep the union records and make the miners pay their dues each month.

It must have developed me rapidly, for the responsibility was a heavy one to throw into a kid. I had to fire grown men who were back in their dues, and the least signal from me that the managers were not paying right, meant a strike of 700 men. I felt this responsibility, and it kept me straight and busy. The only time I had for baseball was Saturday and Sunday afternoons. There were seven small towns near by and we all had teams. I have never had a matter never having been before the board in any shape.

No Grounds for Complaint. "The complaint that the American Security and Trust Company was not given a square deal by the board when it ordered the game between American Security and Trust and Washington Loan and Trust of July 16, postponed, and that only twenty-four hours' notice was given of the special meeting, is only partly true.

"Several days before this special meeting was called the president agreed to call this meeting, which was only necessary by reason of the dilatory and evasive actions of the trust company's manager when requested to informally agree to postponement. The game with Baltimore, Chapter American Institute of Banking was scheduled months before, it being the annual contest for the silver cup donated by one of the chapters. It was a game dear to the heart of every bank man in Washington, officers and clerks alike. The Baltimore boys had gone to large expense for the entertainment of their guests, and to have disappointed them would stamp us as bankers absolutely indifferent to their invitation and hospitality. It should also be noted that the president of the league had addressed a letter to President Kenyon asking that the Washington and American Security and Trust game be postponed, but, in spite of its official character, he did not deem it of sufficient importance to read at the meeting of July 15. It was, however, by vote, included in the minutes. The schedule as originally made up early in the spring of July 15, open, but by reason of rain, a number of games were postponed, and when the schedule of postponed games was made this date was inadvertently included, American Security and Trust Company agreeing in the preparation of the new schedule.

"All things considered, the trust company has no kick coming to it with reference to the postponement or any other plea in its letter to the commission." A representative of the local chapter of Mr. H. S. Reeside, of American Security and Trust, on the telephone, but was informed that he was out of the city. It is not expected that the Fifteenth street bankers will take any further action, and they will in all probability await action by the amateur commission.

An official of the amateur commission was asked what action that body would take in the controversy, and he at first refused to discuss the matter. However, after the writer promised not to divulge his name, he loosened up and said as follows:

"The amateur commission cannot take up or settle any family fights among the nine different leagues now playing under the rules of the commission. We have to accept the decision of the president of the league as to the winner in each of the leagues.

"Each league elects its own officers, and

THE SECRET OF TONI

Copyright, 1910,
D. Appleton & Co.

By MOLLY ELLIOT SEAWELL,
Author of "The Victory," "The Sprightly Romance of Mars," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII—Continued.

There was a large wedding breakfast at the Chateau Bernard, which was at its loveliest in June, with its broad, green terraces, its plashing fountains, and the riot of color in its prim flower beds. The guests sat at many little tables on the broad terrace, where the bride and groom and the wedding party had a very gorgeous one in the middle, just by the fountain, which sparkled brilliantly in the sunshine. A little way off, in a grove of elm trees, a table was set for the soldiers who had acted as the guard of honor at the wedding ceremony. Their wives and sweethearts were included, and here Toni was the great man, second only to Sergt. Duval who was the ranking noncommissioned officer present. Toni was the bridegroom's humble friend and everybody knew the closeness of the tie which existed between them since boyhood.

Toni made a speech which was a marvel of elegance and correctness. It had been written for him by Paul Verney two weeks before, and he had spent the whole fortnight getting it by heart. But at the end Toni suddenly burst into an impromptu speech of his own.

"The lieutenant," he said, "is the best lieutenant, he is the best man, he is the best master, he is the best of everything."

Here Toni, without the least expectation on his part, suddenly found the tears rolling down his cheeks. He laugh and could not imagine what he was crying for, and then his fellows all applauded him vociferously, and Toni sat down and was not able to say another word. And then, when they were through with their breakfast, they saw the bride and groom approaching, Lucie, holding up her shiny white dress, her shiny veil flowing about her, and with nothing on her dark hair except her wedding veil and wreath. Paul carried his helmet with his horse-hair plume in his hand, and the sun shone on this happy unburned face as he led Lucie to where their humble friends were making merry. Toni had hauled out, from under the table, a mysterious box filled with ice and with long-necked bottles, and champagne was soon bubbling in every glass. The sergeant made a speech quite out of his own head, and much better than Toni's, in which he assured Paul Verney of what he knew before—that his troop would die for him to a man. Paul returned thanks and declared that he was conscious of commanding the finest troop in the French army, and then Lucie said a few pretty words of thanks and held up her arm with the great bracelet on it and showed that she had worn no other ornament except that and the bridegroom's gift.

There were more cheers, more champagne, more of everything. It was a very happy wedding because it made many persons happy.

The very happiest person at the wedding, next to Paul and Lucie, was Mme. Verney. That excellent woman was fully persuaded that by her efforts alone and single-handed, she had brought about this match between Paul and Lucie, which otherwise never would have taken place. The relatives and friends of the Bernards were very grand people, indeed, but Paul had no reason to be ashamed of his family contingent.

When the guests were all gone and only the family remained, Toni requested Paul to let the party from Bienville, consisting of himself and the Duvals, speak to the Bienville persons present—the Verneys and the Ravensels—and this Paul very gladly did. The Ravensels and the Verneys were very kind, and from their native town, Paul did Toni a very good service by proclaiming before all the Bienville people, in Sergt. Duval's presence, that Toni was the best fellow alive and the sergeant was doing well to betroth his daughter to such an excellent fellow. This was accepted by the Bienville people because on that glorious day everything went well. They could not but observe, however, that Toni was clean instead of being dirty, and Paul assured them that he had become as industrious as he had before been idle.

When the carriage drove off in the summer dusk with the bride and bridegroom starting on their wedding journey, Toni was the last person with whom they shook hands, and he arranged them comfortably, and then Toni whispered to Denise:

"You will be just as happy as they some day."

The next morning Toni woke up with a feeling of happiness which had been gradually growing on him ever since he had become a private soldier under Paul Verney. This made him long to whistle and sing like a blackbird had not the regulations forbidden soldiers to sing like blackbirds while at their duties. But the first sight that greeted him, as he marched on the parade ground, gave him an unpleasant shock. There were Nicolas and Pierre in the ranks. Their terms of imprisonment had expired, and these two unworthy citizens were restored to their duties.

Toni avoided them all day long as much as he could, and in the evening, being off duty, he went into the town to see Denise. After spending half an hour with her, sitting on a bench in the public square while Mike Duval read her inevitable religious newspaper, a drizzle of rain coming on, he escorted his fiancée and his future aunt-in-law to their lodgings, then walked down into the town to spend the hour that yet remained to him before he was obliged to turn in. The night had grown dark and stormy, and the rain had become a determined down-pour. The street lamps shone fitfully out of the gloom, but the windows of the cheap cafes, where the soldiers congregated, were resplendent with lights.

Toni was standing before one of these and debating whether he should go in, when he felt an arm on each side of him. He looked around and Nicolas' red head was close to his ear, while Pierre's monkey face was on the other side of him.

"Come," said Nicolas, "I know where we can get a good bottle of wine and have a game of cards."

Toni could easily have wrenched himself free from them, but his old cowardly returned to him with a rush. He went sulkily with them under a moral compulsion which he could not have explained to save his life. He hated and feared their company; nevertheless, he went with them. They turned into a dark and narrow side street, and then, diving into a blind alley so dark and noisome that Toni's heart sank within him at the thought of the crimes that could be committed there, they climbed

a rickety outside stair by the side of a tumble-down old house. Toni found himself presently in a garret room, dimly lighted by a malarious old lamp. It was evidently a place of entertainment for a low class of persons. There were sounds of voices below them and next them, but this room was unoccupied. There was a table in the middle of the floor and wine and glasses on it. Toni sat down, much against his will, and Pierre, pouring out some of the wine, which was vile, began to expatiate on the delights of liberty.

"This is a million times better," he said, "than being locked up in prison with the devil of a sentry keeping his eye on one perpetually, and three days on bread and water for sneaking."

Toni longed to say that what was better than being richly dressed, but dared not. Then Nicolas began:

"We should not have been imprisoned at all but for that scoundrel, Lieut. Verney. He has a spite against us, and takes it out as only an officer can on a private soldier."

"It's a lie," cried Toni. This aspersion on their honor was not in the least resented by either Pierre or Nicolas, who knew, as only they and God did, what lies they were.

"Well," Toni continued, "I understand that you are to marry the sergeant's daughter. My faith, you look prosperous. Count Delorme's money must have done you a lot of good."

"I never had any of Count Delorme's money," burst out Toni.

"Who is lying now?" murmured Nicolas slyly. "What about the twenty-franc piece?"

That was certainly a very neat job of yours, Toni," said Pierre. "I have never seen a man done for quicker than you did for Count Delorme. One blow like this!" He drew off and went through a pantomime of giving Nicolas a blow on the side of the head. Nicolas, likewise pretending, tumbled over in his chair as Count Delorme had fallen over in the dark at the Chateau Bernard. It made Toni sick to see them. They laughed, and they had gone through with this mimic tragedy and were about to drink their health. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

To die, Paul, so full of life, so happy, and yesterday married! He said to Toni with a smiling face as he waived his hand back and forth. Then they again abused Paul Verney, and Toni said nothing. He scorned to defend his friend from two such scoundrels as those before him and he longed to get away, but that strange and insupportable fear of them nailed him to his chair. Presently Nicolas said to him:

"Toni, we might as well tell you the truth. Lieut. Verney is a lie."

ized the whole night through until the bugle call next morning. He could not eat that whole day nor sleep the next night and pined like a woman. During that day he saw Nicolas and Pierre a dozen times at least, and they always flashed him a mocking glance which he understood perfectly well and which gave him a feeling as if a red-hot iron hand were clutching at his heart, for Toni was of an imaginative nature.

He did not see Denise that day, and spent another sleepless and horror-stricken night. The next morning it occurred to him, as a means of escaping Denise's tender and searching eyes, as well as the hateful company of Pierre and Nicolas, that he might possibly shame himself and be sent to the hospital. He did not need to sham, however—he was in a high fever and the surgeon swore at him for not reporting before, so he found a temporary haven of refuge in the hospital. There he spent several days. The doctor, who was a clever young fellow, was a good deal puzzled by the case. He could not make out whether Toni was malingering or not. He evidently wished to be considered ill—at the same time there were indications about him of his being really ill. If he had not had the reputation of being an admirable soldier, the doctor would have suspected Toni had done something wrong, and was in hiding, as it were, in the hospital.

The sergeant called to see him and was rather rough with him, considering that nothing was the matter with Toni.

"Do you think I would lie here and take all these nasty messes if there were nothing the matter with me?" cried poor Toni.

There was indeed something very serious the matter with him, but it was a kind of suffering which not all the doctor's instruments and medicines could reach. Denise, with her aunt, called twice to see him, but both times Toni feigned to be asleep as soon as he distinguished their voices, and it was against the rules to disturb him.

A week passed, on the second morning of which he found a long, sharp knife under his pillow, and at the end of that time the doctor turned Toni out of the hospital, much against the latter's will. He had then to resume his duties, of course, and affect cheerfulness as well as he could. He succeeded rather better in the last respect than might have been expected, and Denise only saw in him the weakness and lassitude which she thought were due to his recent illness.

On the day fortnight after Paul Verney's wedding, he returned with his bride—the honeymoon of a subalternant is inevitably brief. The very next day the practice march was to begin, and Toni did not see Paul Verney until the next morning, when the troop was forming in the barracks square.

The recruit marched out with colors flying to do a practice march of two days' duration. Paul was riding at the head of his troop. He was a fine horseman and had a good military air, and everything about him was spick and span as becomes an officer.

Toni, who was at the end of the file, got a good look at Paul as he cantered along by the side of the troopers and a look of affectionate intelligence flashed between the two young men. Toni saw that Paul was truly happy—he was, in fact, always happy when performing his military duties, because he was a born soldier, apt at obedience and ready at command. In the same file with Toni rode Nicolas and Pierre.

They passed out of the town on the dusty highroad, their helmets gleaming in the sun and the steady tramp of their horses' hoofs sounding like thunder on the highroad, and raising a great white dust like a pillar of cloud by day. Crowds of people ran out to see them, and cheered them as they passed. The day was bright and warm, but not hot enough to distress either the men or the horses. They kept on steadily until noon, when there was an hour of rest and refreshment. Again they took up the line of march. A cool breeze was blowing and it was as pleasant a June day as one could wish for marching. Toward 3 o'clock, as they were passing the outskirts of a wood, Toni put his hand to his head and reined in his saddle. His horse kept on steadily in the ranks. It was very well simulated, and Paul rode up and caught Toni by the arm.

"You had better drop out," he said, "and rest a while by the roadside and let me take your place." Toni touched his cap and said: "Thank you, sir, and slipping out of his saddle, he went to a grassy place under a tree, where he sat down and mopped his face. He looked quite pale and weak, but the surgeon, when he rode up, gave him a sharp look, made him drink some wine and water out of his canteen, and said: "You will be all right in ten minutes," and rode on.

Ten minutes passed, and twenty, and thirty. The regiment was out of sight. Toni's troop was a part of the rear guard. The dull echo of thousands of hoofs fell in the distance. Toni was quiet in that shaded woody spot, with farm-houses basking in the sun, the highroad gleaming white, and the railway beyond making two streaks of steel-blue light in the distance. Toni, with his helmet off, and his horse browsing quietly near him, sat on the ground under the shade with the glaring midday light around him, and waited for Paul Verney, who he knew would return.

Nicolas and Pierre, who were presently close after him, were also waiting. Toni heard the galloping of a horse and the rattling of a saber in its scabbard, and there was Paul riding up. He swung himself off his horse and came up to Toni and said:

"I came back to see what was the matter with you. I thought you would have rejoined by this time."

Toni made no reply, but raised his black eyes at Paul's blue ones and they were so full of misery that Paul involuntarily put his hand on Toni's shoulder and asked, "What is it?"

Toni tried to speak, but the words would not come. Paul, putting his hand in his breast, drew out a small flask of brandy and poured the best part of it down Toni's throat.

"Now," he said, "tell me what it is."

Toni's vocabulary was not extensive and he hunted around in his mind for language to express the horror of what he was suffering, but he could only find the simplest words.

"Nicolas and Pierre," he said, "those scoundrels—have ordered me to kill you. They say if I don't they will kill me and kill you afterward themselves."

There was a silence for a minute or two after this.

Paul knew very well that Toni was neither drunk nor crazy, and he grasped at once that Toni meant. His face grew pale and his blond mustache twitched a little.

"So they want to put me out of the way—what for?"

"Because they think you are responsible for their being in trouble so much. They are afraid of you, Paul," Toni said. Paul's manner was unconsciously but he was thinking then of Paul as he had known him years ago, an apple-cheeked boy who understood him and even understood Jacques.

Paul knew very well that Toni was neither drunk nor crazy, and he grasped at once that Toni meant. His face grew pale and his blond mustache twitched a little.

"So they want to put me out of the way—what for?"

"Because they think you are responsible for their being in trouble so much. They are afraid of you, Paul," Toni said. Paul's manner was unconsciously but he was thinking then of Paul as he had known him years ago, an apple-cheeked boy who understood him and even understood Jacques.

Paul knew very well that Toni was neither drunk nor crazy, and he grasped at once that Toni meant. His face grew pale and his blond mustache twitched a little.

"So they want to put me out of the way—what for?"

"Because they think you are responsible for their being in trouble so much. They are afraid of you, Paul," Toni said. Paul's manner was unconsciously but he was thinking then of Paul as he had known him years ago, an apple-cheeked boy who understood him and even understood Jacques.

Paul knew very well that Toni was neither drunk nor crazy, and he grasped at once that Toni meant. His face grew pale and his blond mustache twitched a little.

Paul took his helmet off and let the cool breeze blow on his close-cropped sandy hair.

"Come, now," he said, "tell me all about it—how it happened."

"It is about Count Delorme," said Toni, gazing between his sentences. "You know, Paul, I always was a coward about most things."

"Yes, I know."

"And when I was in the circus those two rascals used to take me with them sometimes on their robbing expeditions and make me keep watch and help to carry off the stolen things. I was frightened to death at what they made me do."

"Too frightened to refuse to go with them. I never knew of their killing anybody, except Count Delorme, but that night they waylaid him in the dark. I swear to you—oh! God, I swear to you a million times—I never touched Count Delorme. I thought they were going to rob him only—I did not dream they were going to kill him. But he resisted when they tried to get his money, and Nicolas struck him a blow and he fell over. And they put a twenty-franc piece in my pocket and swore that I had killed him and robbed him. Then I determined to get away from them and so, when I was conscripted, I could have got off because I was the only son of a widow, but I thought if I were in the army I might escape them and I meant then to hunt for you and to tell you all about it. And I thought I had escaped them—oh! how happy I was—but they turned up as you know and I have not had a moment's peace since. Two weeks ago they forced me to go with them."

"Forced you to go with them?" said Paul indignantly. "Toni, you are the greatest coward."

"I know it," replied Toni. "I always was. And they told me that they meant to kill you and we played a game of cards to determine whether they should do it or I—I think of it! Of course I lost, and they promised me if I did not kill you that I should be killed. And they told me to drop out of the ranks and that you would come after me. I thought I would know where I could find it." Toni drew it from his bosom. It was an ordinary table knife, but of well-tempered steel and as sharp as a razor. "And I was to kill you and leave your body here where it could not be found for several hours—and make the best of my way off. Of course, I should, I should have been caught and guillotined, but what did they care about that?"

Toni looked at the knife and then at Paul. He had heard of the "knife" and he had seen it in the hands of the men who had killed him. Paul Verney, who was as quiet as a lamb and as brave as a lion, looked at Toni sorrowfully.

"I think I can get rid of those two rascals in time," he said, "get them sent to Algiers. But they will have